of UN and the World Bank. As part of this, US$ 5 million has been remitted to the two Trust Funds. The balance amount is to be remitted within the current year.

Visit of Myanmar's Head of State to India

741. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gen. Than Shwe, Myanmar's Head of State has recently visited our country and held discussion;

(b) if so, the details of the discussion;

(c) whether any agreement had been signed with that country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) During his visit, Senior General Than Shwe held wide-ranging talks with the Hon'ble Prime Minister on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest and concern. The areas of discussion included economic development of the India-Myanmar border region through cooperation in various infrastructure projects; measures for enhancing bilateral trade; increasing people-to-people contacts through cultural and educational exchanges; cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues and energy sector.

(c) Yes Sir.

(d) Three Agreements were signed during the visit, namely (i) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Non-Traditional Security Issues; (ii) Memorandum of Understanding on the Tamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project in Myanmar; and (iii) Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2004-06.

Policy to deal with hostage crisis

742. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have not evolved any official policy on how to deal with the hostage situations despite the fact that a

number of such unfortunate incidents have taken place several times during the past;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to evolve any such policy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) It is the policy of the Government of India not to compromise with terrorist groups or elements. However, while adhering to this principle, the objective of the Government is to ensure the safety and well-being of all its citizens , whether in India or abroad. In case of hostage-taking, Government makes all efforts possible to secure the early and safe release of its nationals. In order to deal with hostage situations, the Government have an institutionalized mechanism in place. There is a Crisis Management Group which is set up immediately and is tasked with the constant monitoring and handling of the situation in close consultation with concerned agencies, our diplomatic missions abroad and with foreign governments. The Cabinet Secretary also holds a parallel set of inter-ministerial meetings, as required, to take appropriate decision. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs may also meet, as necessary, to review the situation and take appropriate decisions. This mechanism remains in force until the crisis ends. It needs to be pointed out that no two hostage situations are entirely similar and different responses may be required depending upon specific circumstances to reach the objectives of Government policy.

Irregularities in hiring accommodation for Haj Pilgrims-2004

743. SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about large number of irregularities committed by Consulate General of India in Saudi Arabia for hiring buildings in Makkah, Madinah and Mina for providing accommodation to Haj pilgrims during Haj 2004; and

(b) if so, the details of irregularities reported so far and the action taken by the Government to prevent such irregularities?